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WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Argentina: Violence Criticized

Leading Argentines are becoming increasingly outspoken in condemning right-wing abuses of the government's anti-terrorist campaign.

The US embassy reports that it is hearing criticism from a wide range of political figures, churchmen, journalists, and even civil servants. Many were content to see the military come to power in March but are now distressed at right-wing violence.

They are alarmed that the government still has not accounted for a large number of prisoners, and the recent upsurge in indiscriminate killings has convinced many that they have more to fear from the right than from leftist guerrillas.

Despite expressions of concern in many circles, there is no organized campaign being mounted against the government, and expressions of criticism have been cautious.

The leader of the country's second largest political party recently signed a declaration that condemned the disappearance of two leading members of the party but only indirectly indicated the party's belief that the security forces were responsible. Both have since been released, according to a communique.

The church is said to be convinced that security officials were responsible for the recent deaths of five priests alleged to be leftists and is less inclined to be conciliatory toward the junta than before the papal nuncio strongly protested the killings.

President Videla may be trying to curtail abuses. Rumored military reassignments, for example, would shift two so-called "hard-liners" out of their troop command positions. Moreover, a presidential spokesman last week assured the US embassy that the perpetrators of the murder of 30 alleged leftists the weekend before would be punished.

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